



MSAR
Quarterly Newsletter
Spring 2008

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volunteer profile](#)

MSAR NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to the MSAR e-Newsletter

We are pleased to introduce you to the MSAR e-Newsletter. Each quarterly issue will arrive by email and highlight important MSAR news and announcements, education and training opportunities, volunteer resources, and preparedness in the news.

We encourage you to share the MSAR e-Newsletter with your colleagues, who can receive a copy by volunteering for MSAR at www.mass.gov/MSAR. We look forward to your comments about this new communication tool offered by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). To provide comments or feedback about the MSAR e-Newsletter, please email msar@dph.state.ma.us.

**MDPH is pleased to announce a new director of the
Emergency Preparedness Bureau.**

Mary E. Clark is the new Director of the Emergency Preparedness Bureau at MDPH. In this role, she oversees state and local emergency preparedness activities funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant as well as healthcare preparedness activities funded through the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response in the federal department of Health and Human Services.

Previously, Mary was the Regional Public Health Preparedness Manager at the Cambridge Public Health Department, coordinating public health emergency preparedness planning for Massachusetts Emergency Preparedness Region 4b, a coalition of 27 local health departments in the Metro Boston area. In 2007, Region 4b was recognized nationally for its work on development of local and regional response plans, public health workforce training, and exercises and drills.

Mary also served as Program Manager for the Cambridge Advanced Practice Center for Emergency Preparedness. One of only eight such centers nationwide, the Cambridge APC includes expertise in preparedness planning, political science, public health law, sociology, public policy, adult

education, surveillance, epidemiology, and community-based research. Its work focuses on community and regional readiness for a public health emergency by developing, implementing, and evaluating innovative regional solutions to the preparedness problems facing local health authorities.

Mary has also served as an associate counsel for the Massachusetts Medical Society, and managed programs to improve access to health care at the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, Community Research Initiative of New England, and JRI Health in Boston. She received her MPH from Harvard School of Public Health, and her law degree from New York University.

Watch Your Mail

During the month of April all MSAR volunteers will receive an MSAR “go bag” and instructions for preparing for an MSAR activation.

Volunteers are asked to carefully review these instructions to ensure ready access to all of the recommended items and to store the “go bag” in a safe, easily reached location. Once volunteer credentialing is complete, MSAR participants will also receive a badge holder and lanyard. The badge holder is designed to hold a picture identification along with any identification issued at the deployment site.

Upcoming MSAR Drill

During June 2008, MDPH will be partnering with local public health and others in Region 1 to conduct an emergency preparedness drill.

There will be a mock scenario, where public health partners will be called upon to respond. MSAR will be activated at this time and we will test our current activation and deployment protocols. Information regarding this drill will be distributed to our volunteers in the upcoming months.

Legislative Update

Often referred to as the “Pandemic Preparedness Bill,” S. 2259 remains in the Senate Ways & Means Committee where it has been since mid-2007.

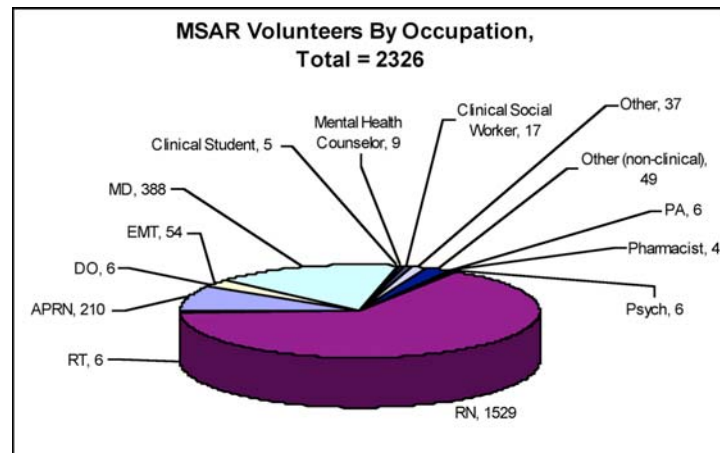
In the fall of 2007, MDPH convened a group of interested people and organizations to discuss the bill, which resulted in agreement on a number of proposed amendments. These were communicated to the Legislature. In January, 2008, a strong letter of support for the bill, signed by the Commissioner of Public Health and eleven other interested organizations, was sent to a number of key legislators.

Section 13 of S. 2259 would establish MSAR by statute and would specify how it would be activated. That section would also provide activated MSAR volunteers with liability and workers' compensations protections as if they were state employees.

MSAR Volunteer Profile

MSAR's web registration portal has been up and running since December 2006. We are pleased to announce that as of March 27th, 2008 we have over 2300 volunteers registered with MSAR.

Initially we focused our recruitment efforts on medical doctors and nurses, which make up the majority of our numbers; however, we have now expanded our recruitment efforts to include 26 healthcare professions. The specific breakdown of volunteers is as follows:



EDUCATION & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Speaker Series

Harvard School of Public Health – Center for Public Health Preparedness
Volunteers for Disaster Preparedness: Evolving National and State Experiences with the Medical Reserve Corp
April 23, 2008

12:30 - 1:30 PM

Harvard School of Public Health

John Auerbach, MBA, Commissioner, MDPH and
Howard Koh, MD, MPH, Associate Dean for Public Health Practice, Harvard School of Public Health will discuss the role of volunteerism in disaster response.

Program Details and Registration Information:

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hcphp/>

Protecting Children in Emergencies

April 29, 2008

7:30 - 11:30 AM

The program will include brief presentations on carbon monoxide poisoning, E-Coli, pandemic influenza, a multiple casualty incident, and relevant public health systems, and will conclude with a tabletop exercise. This program has been designed for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses and others with clinical backgrounds who have responsibilities for children.

Maine Medical Center, Portland, Maine

Program Details and Registration Information:

www.mcph.org/events.htm

Know the Response: Disaster Management and Communication for the Health Care Provider

April 30, 2008

5:30 - 9:00 PM

Sponsored by the Massachusetts Medical Society in collaboration with the MDPH

MMS Headquarters, Waltham

CME Credit: 2.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ (RM)

[Program Details and Registration Information](#)

Delvalle Institute for Emergency Preparedness Conference Series 2008

Lessons Learned from International Conflict & IED

Response: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Local Healthcare and Security

May 12, 2008

Program Details and Registration Information:

<http://www.bphc.org/programs/program.asp?b=3&d=&p=186>

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Medical Reserve Corps Update

MSAR partners very closely with our local counterparts- the Medical Reserve Corps (MRCs).

The MRC program was founded by the federal government shortly after 9/11. The national system brings together people who have skills related to health care as well as citizen volunteers. They serve as a team during times of emergency or need in their own community. MRC units are trained and prepared to respond to emergencies and they provide education, outreach and various health services throughout the year. For more information about MRCs in Massachusetts, please visit

www.mamedicalreservecorps.org.

HHAN Update

The Health & Homeland Alert Network (HHAN) is a system that delivers informational bulletins by emails, telephone calls, text messages, and web posts to purpose-organized groups of people.

MDPH created the HHAN in 2001 to push critical information to every community, hospital and health center in the Commonwealth. Today many other organizations use the HHAN. Other parts of the state government, local governments, and non-profit organizations all employ the HHAN in service of the citizens. We are in the process of setting up a specific MSAR HHAN group. For more information about the HHAN or if you are interested in signing up for the HHAN, please contact alert.network@state.ma.us.

GetPandemicReady.org

For practical tips and advice on pandemic preparedness visit www.GetPandemicReady.org, a web site offering guidance and advice to help families prepare for an influenza pandemic.

PREPAREDNESS IN THE NEWS

Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Disease, Disasters, and Bioterrorism, 2007 - A Report from "Trust for America's Health"

This fifth annual report includes state-by-state health preparedness scores, based on 10 key indicators, to assess health emergency preparedness capabilities.

Included in the report are findings which indicate that while important progress has been made, critical areas of the nation's emergency health preparedness effort still require attention. In addition, the continuing trend of annual cuts in federal funding for state and local preparedness activities threatens the nation's safety. To access the complete report visit: <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror07/>.

Public Health Preparedness: Mobilizing State by State

The CDC's Coordinating Office for Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response (COTPER) has released its inaugural report on public health emergency preparedness.

The report, Public Health Preparedness: Mobilizing State by State, highlights the progress that has been made in state

and local preparedness and response, identifies preparedness challenges facing public health departments, and outlines CDC's efforts to address those challenges. Designed to increase accountability regarding the country's investment in preparedness activities, the report presents national data as well as state-specific snapshots for all 50 states and four directly funded localities: Chicago; Los Angeles County; New York City; and Washington, DC. To download the complete report:

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/publications/feb08phprep/>

Northeastern to lead Homeland Security Center of Excellence

Northeastern University is the first university in Massachusetts and one of only 11 universities nationwide to win a Centers of Excellence grant from the Department of Homeland Security.

The new center, called ALERT (Awareness and Localization of Explosives-Related Threats), is driven by the needs facing homeland security such as airline passenger and cargo screening and the mitigation of explosive blasts to minimize damage. For details about the grant visit:

www.neu.edu/voice/evoice/080227/feature.html

Post-Flu Bacterial Infections Causing Concern


A serious form of pneumonia following influenza caused two of the four flu-related deaths in children in Massachusetts.

In both cases, the pneumonia was caused by an infection with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). The flu virus can undermine the body's defense against potentially deadly infections such as pneumonia. According to an article in the Telegram and Gazette, in the 2006-07 flu season, 69 children died from bacterial infections after influenza. Twenty-two of those had staph infections, and 15 of those were MRSA infections.

Meanwhile, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) encourages providers to continue vaccinations through May. Providers enrolled in the MDPH Vaccine Program should contact their regional health office or the MDPH Vaccine Unit at (617) 983-6828 for free state-supplied influenza vaccine. Influenza activity in Massachusetts is declining, but the MDPH received 980 positive rapid and culture reports for the week ending March 15.

Department of Homeland Security Releases REAL ID Regulation

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)



announced a final rule establishing minimum security standards for state-issued drivers' licenses and identification cards.

The rule sets uniform standards that enhance the integrity and reliability of drivers' licenses and identification cards, strengthen issuance capabilities, and increase security at drivers' license and identification card production facilities to give law enforcement and security officials a powerful advantage against falsified documents, and to protect against identity theft. For more information please visit www.dhs.gov.

Contact Us
MSAR

www.mass.gov/MSAR

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
250 Washington St., First Floor
Boston, MA, 02108
msar@dph.state.ma.us
617-624-5193

BE THE RESPONSE

This e-mail newsletter was produced by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in collaboration with the Massachusetts Medical Society.



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MASSACHUSETTS
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